

Response to Public Meeting motions

7)

As a resident and ratepayer of the Huon Valley my motion to this Public Meeting is that I have no confidence in the appointment of Mr Jason Browne to the position of GM of the HVC, I have no confidence in the GM recruitment process, I do not believe our Council can function with a conflicted person in such an important role as GM, and I am calling on his immediate resignation and requesting Council to that the GM recruitment process commence again.

20)

Can the General Manager, Mr Jason Browne, please explain what measures he took to manage his conflict of interest along with his partner Joanne Inches of Red Giant appropriately and in accordance with contemporary HR practices that All conflicts of interest, actual, apprehended or potential, should be documented and effectively managed during the recruitment process? Could he please refer to the various stages of the progression of his application from the time of submitting his application, through the short listing selection procedure and ultimately at interview.

It appears the Auditor General found the whole recruitment process flawed. Having been appointed to the position, can Mr Browne further please explain what measures he has taken since starting as General Manager to ensure that the conflict of interest is adequately documented, and therefore that there is an ongoing basis the announcement on the HVC website that “The announcement of the new General Manager comes at the end of a rigorous recruitment process”

Response:

As outlined in the 12 October 2021 Auditor General’s report section 1.5 on page 35 “The responsibility for managing a conflict of interest in recruitment lies with the employment decision maker, not the applicant.” Importantly, as referenced under section 1.13 in Table 3 on page 37 of the same report the conflict of interest was reported showing genuine attempt by all parties for the conflict of interest to be managed appropriately.

The Auditor General’s report identifies three better practice management strategies to manage or avoid a conflict of interest under section 1.12 on page 36, with one being “restricting the conflicted person’s involvement in the recruitment process”. The agreed approach by the Panel and Red Giant was to rely on this approach, which was communicated back to me prior to my interview with the Panel.

As noted under section 2.11 on page 41 of the Auditor General’s report “A better practice approach would have been to halt the recruitment process, report the conflict to the full Council and allow the full Council to determine whether the contractual relationship with the Consultant would continue.”

It is reflecting on this advice that Council has taken action to engage a consultant to provide more prescriptive guidance surrounding conflict of interest management under future processes to ensure we avoid the perception surrounding this process, and continually improve our processes.